

CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



City of Liberty Lake Comprehensive Plan

A. Introduction

The City of Liberty Lake has always been known as a desirable place to live, work, and play, and is now establishing the reputation as “Spokane County’s Premier Address.” One of the most important factors that determine whether people or businesses locate here is the area’s livability. Among the factors that influence livability are the area’s ability to provide employment opportunities, viable businesses that provide goods and services, the quality of public services, the area’s natural beauty, good schools, strong neighborhoods, and efficient traffic circulation. Maintaining our community’s livability requires that we maintain a strong, sustainable, economic climate.



Economic Development Element Vision Statements¹

1. Encourage diversity in businesses, variety in shopping, full-service restaurants, as well as the light industry, tech sector, and service-oriented business we have already
2. Light rail terminal with ancillary businesses nearby
3. Regional business development center
4. Promote unity within the city and surrounding communities, governments, and businesses

B. History and Background



The economy plays a central role in maintaining the vitality and quality of life within a community. A healthy economy creates good paying jobs, providing economic opportunities to all citizens. The economy also supports the tax base, providing for schools, police, fire protection, parks, and many other community facilities and services.

The importance of economic development is recognized in state legislation by the inclusion of economic development as one of the 14 planning goals intended to guide local comprehensive plan development, as well as being included as a policy topic in the Countywide Planning Policies for Spokane County. The Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes the following as economic development goals for the State of Washington.

- Encourage economic development that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans.
- Promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons.
- Encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth.
- Ensure economic growth occurs within the capacities of the state’s natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to present goals and policies that support and encourage a strong, vibrant economy. The Element focuses on business startup,

¹ Vision Statements were created by the Planning Commission and City Council to reflect citizen comments.

business retention, expansion and recruitment, regional issues, environment, customer service/regulation, income, education and training, and tourism. While this Element focuses on these specific topics, it is important to recognize that the entire Comprehensive Plan can be considered as an economic development tool.

While the City serves as the greatest advocate for local economic development, the City of Liberty Lake also partners with several regional organizations, such as the Spokane Area Economic Development Council, a community based, non-profit organization that helps attract, create, and retain quality jobs for the region; the Regional Chamber of Commerce, which helps provide leadership to create an environment in which members, businesses, and the community can succeed; and Idaho Jobs Plus, which is a Coeur d'Alene Area Nonprofit Economic Development Corporation

C. Goals and Policies

Sustainable Regional Economic Development

This section provides goals and policies that support cooperation and coordination at a regional level to ensure sustainable economic development. There are a number of established organizations in the region that are engaged in economic development activities. It is in the best interests of the City of Liberty Lake to support and collaborate with these regional organizations. By focusing on common goals and allocating resources accordingly, government and private organizations can work together regionally to maximize successful business start-up, retention, expansion and recruitment efforts.

Goal

ED.1: City of Liberty Lake will cooperate regionally and locally to:

- a. Promote a sustainable, strong, diverse and healthy economy;**
- b. Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses;**
- c. Foster the startup and development of new businesses;**
- d. Encourage the relocation of environmentally responsible and appropriate businesses to the Spokane region;**
- e. Promote jobs that support good living wages;**
- f. Ensure the safe and effective economic use of renewable resources as well as recycled resources.**

Policies

ED.1.1: Provide for a diverse marketplace that recognizes and encourages a range of cultural, social and economic opportunities.

ED.1.2: Improve the effectiveness of capital improvement programming by encouraging communication and coordination between local government and the private sector.

ED.1.3: Work with other jurisdictions, community organizations and business organizations to establish specific evaluation methods that will annually measure the community's overall quality of life and economic viability. The following issues, among others, should be considered when developing indicators to establish evaluation goals:

- a. Quality of life issues such as crime rate, schools, health care, affordable housing, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities;**

- b. Economic development issues such as wages; per capita personal and median household income, percentage of population below poverty level, business formation, expansion and retention, economic base, and education.

Goal

ED.2: Capitalize on the community's positive characteristics and improve and enhance areas that may be lacking.

Policies

ED.2.1: Support the greater utilization and development of the Central Business District (CBD) as a hub for expanded residential, retail, business, and cultural activity.

ED.2.2: Encourage developments that contribute to community improvements (i.e., contributions to culture, recreation, tourism, public improvements, environmental improvements, business incubator system facilities, open space, and other community projects).

ED.2.3: Encourage high quality design and development throughout the City.

Tools and Strategies

Business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts work hand-in-hand in maintaining a successful economy. Business retention and expansion programs address the issues that might affect decisions by established businesses and industries to remain or expand. Such issues might include availability of public services and facilities, permitting procedures, property taxes and labor-training programs. Recruitment programs largely focus on attracting light industries as a major economic development strategy. Retaining, expanding, and attracting industrial businesses is important because they generally provide higher-paying jobs, which creates an economic multiplier effect throughout the region.

Goal

ED.3: Create a healthy and sustainable local economy through the start-up, retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses.

Policies

ED.3.1: Encourage economic development through a variety of mechanisms.

ED.3.2: Support business retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts.

ED.3.3: Support public and private programs and activities that act to diversify the economy.

ED.3.4: Encourage job recruitment efforts towards those sectors that:

- a. Are compatible with the environmental and quality-of-life standards of the City and region;
- b. Provide good living wages;
- c. Help diversify the economy; and
- d. Capitalize on the strengths of the region.

ED.3.5: Support and provide, where appropriate, economic development techniques to provide a business climate conducive to new and start-up businesses.

ED.3.6: Encourage creation and retention of home-based businesses that are consistent with neighborhood character.

ED.3.7: Support efforts to develop a formal process involving government, civic organizations, and businesses to study and develop strategies for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.

ED.3.8: Encourage development of contingency plans for the possible loss of any of the employers in the City that have a significant economic impact on the City, as well as Spokane County as a whole.

ED.3.9: Identify and implement a variety of private sector financial incentives to leverage the attraction and/or expansion of targeted business sectors.

ED.3.10: Work with the area Chambers of Commerce and other entities to support patronage of local businesses.

ED.3.11: Utilize citizen committees in developing and maintaining an economic development plan that sets priorities for economic and redevelopment activities.

Environment

In recent years there has been a greater recognition that economic development should not come at the expense of environmental quality, which itself is recognized as an important component of the community. A balanced approach to environmental sustainability advocates a balance between the utilization of area resources and economic growth. Economic growth should not exceed the ability of the natural or built environment to sustain growth over the long term.

Goal

ED.4: Recognize the importance of environmental quality and acknowledge that protection of the environment will contribute to economic vitality.

Policies

ED.4.1: Recognize that environmental quality and economic development are complementary objectives.

ED.4.2: Encourage recruitment of low-impact, environmentally friendly businesses.

ED.4.3: Encourage programs that promote sustainable business practices (e.g., recycling, pollution control, solar energy, Commute Trip Reduction).

Regulation

A regulatory environment that offers flexibility, consistency, predictability, and clear direction enhances economic development opportunities.

Goals

ED.5a: Provide consistent, fair, and timely regulations that are flexible, responsive, and effective.

ED.5b: Promote public/private partnerships that encourage innovation and creativity in the economic expansion of our region.

Policies

ED.5.1: Create and encourage partnerships between government, the educational community, civic organizations, and businesses to deal with economic issues at all levels.

ED.5.2: Actively promote the City's economic development goals and policies at the state and federal level to encourage legislation that supports economic development and to provide funding for economic development programs. For example, legislative changes can be pursued through direct lobbying of legislatures or through the combined efforts of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC).

ED.5.3: Provide for the option of tax increment financing, when appropriate.

ED.5.4: Each individual citizen will be afforded the highest possible quality of customer service and attention to aid in facilitation of Liberty Lake's Economic Development.

ED.5.5: Review development regulations continuously to ensure clarity, consistency, predictability, and direction. Provide opportunities for citizens to initiate amendments to inconsistent, outdated, inappropriate, unnecessary, or confusing regulations. Amendments shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

ED.5.6: Ensure timely processing of applications by requiring that mandatory timelines, consistent with state legislation, are adhered to for permitting processes.

ED.5.7: Create flexible development regulations that are responsive to the potential for regulatory practices to undermine economic development purposes.

Income

One of the primary reasons to pursue economic development is to increase the standard of living for the citizens of the City of Liberty Lake. One of the primary goals of this economic development element is to create more living-wage jobs. A strategic approach in the pursuit of new jobs is to recruit, retain, and expand the types of industries that provide quality, good-paying jobs.

Goal

ED.6: Encourage the creation of jobs that provide good living wages.

Policies

ED.6.1: Encourage the creation of "living-wage" jobs that include health and retirement benefits.

ED.6.2: Encourage the start-up, retention, expansion, and recruitment of new businesses that hire local residents, including youths.

ED.6.3: Direct the City of Liberty Lake Planning & Community Development Department, in conjunction with other organizations, to develop an economic development strategy that is consistent with the City's Economic Development Element.

ED.6.4: Support sustainable economic development through the following actions:

- a. Provide basic services;
- b. Develop land use plans and infrastructure in anticipation of need;
- c. Strengthen the identifiable assets that make the City distinctive and that set it apart from other communities.

- d. Develop balanced regulations so that economic growth continues, but not at the expense of our quality of life;
- e. Strive for an efficient and appropriate permitting process;
- f. Provide prompt access to information important to economic activity;
- g. Facilitate economic activity in commercial areas through public/private partnerships if the public benefit exceeds the cost;
- h. Promote discussion between businesses and educational institutions to ensure that workers are trained for today's and tomorrow's jobs;
- i. Encourage the provision of high quality education services and health services in City of Liberty Lake.

Qualified Labor Force

Qualified labor is essential to retain and recruit businesses. The basic cornerstone in the development of a qualified labor force is access to education. Located near the City of Liberty Lake and the surrounding area is a diverse group of higher-education facilities, including community colleges, universities, and private technical and business schools. These schools, as well as the K-through-12 public and private schools, should be encouraged to constantly evaluate their programs to be responsive to the changing job market. Partnerships between business and the educational community should be nurtured to further this process. Business should be encouraged to partner with labor unions and other organizations to develop specialized training programs to meet the needs of employers.

Goal

ED.7: Promote a qualified labor force that is globally competitive and responds to the changing needs of the workplace.

Policies

ED.7.1: Encourage educational institutions to locate in the City of Liberty Lake, especially those that provide technical training to support businesses targeted for recruitment and retention.

ED.7.2: The City of Liberty Lake should support and encourage K-through-12 education to include skills-based training and creative partnerships with business.

ED.7.3: Encourage community colleges and technical schools to develop customized training programs for new and start-up businesses.

ED.7.4: Encourage the development of the region's colleges and universities into a world-class higher-education consortium that prepares students for the highly technical jobs of the information age, improves communication skills, and delivers comprehensive education (post-secondary through the doctorate level).

ED.7.5: Encourage and support public/private partnerships, such as SIRT1, in training and education.

ED.7.6: Encourage employers to provide and support continuing education for their employees.

ED.7.7: Encourage cooperation between businesses, unions, and other organizations in developing job training and educational opportunities.

ED.7.8: Encourage an interactive relationship between schools and businesses through apprenticeship, mentoring, and other programs.

Tourism

The cultural, recreational, and scenic opportunities in the region make tourism an excellent provider of employment. Located either within the City or within an easy driving distance, visitors can enjoy lakes, golf, scenic mountains, community events, and an excellent trail system. This section provides goals and policies to promote and expand tourism as an economic development tool.

Goal

ED.8: Encourage the growth of tourism as a sustainable provider of jobs and markets in the region and work together with community groups and businesses to make the region a world-class tourist destination.

Policies

ED.8.1: Support, promote, and preserve the natural, historic, and cultural features of the region as part of our economy and quality of life.

ED.8.2: Promote outdoor recreation opportunities including, but not limited to, biking, hiking, kayaking, backpacking, fishing, boating, horseback-riding, golf, and touring.

ED.8.3: Promote regional and national attractions such as a farmer's market, Pavillion Park events, Hoopfest, Bloomsday, and other local and regional events.

ED.8.4: Plan and support the physical infrastructure needed for new tourist attractions and tourist activities.

Infill and Redevelopment



Infill and redevelopment programs provide an economic development tool to revitalize under-utilized or vacant parcels or structures. Infill development would develop or redevelop vacant commercial or industrial structures or parcels of land that are already provided with services. Re-development policies help utilize existing structures before constructing new commercial or industrial buildings.

Goal

ED.9: Facilitate infill and redevelopment of existing commercial or industrial vacant structures or parcels.

Policies

ED.9.1: Participate in inventorying and identifying specific structures and parcels for infill and redevelopment.

ED.9.2: Participate in the promotion of these structures viable for re-development to businesses interested in re-locating to the City of Liberty Lake or to another location within the City.

Adequate Infrastructure and Land Supply

Each potential business has its own unique set of location requirements. To attract new employers and to allow existing business to expand, a diverse inventory of industrial and

commercial land must be maintained. Sites must be available in a range of sizes and locations with appropriate zoning and compatible surrounding land uses. Infrastructure availability is one of the most critical factors to encourage economic development. Sewer, water, transportation facilities, and communications facilities must be available or easily obtained. For attracting industrial uses, an adequate supply of usable industrial land unencumbered by conflicting land uses and/or environmental constraints, is important.

Goal

ED.10: Ensure an adequate amount of usable industrial and commercially available land in which new businesses may locate. Ensure adequate transportation and utility availability in order for new businesses to locate in the area.

Policies

ED.10.1: Encourage the development of business/industrial areas that can supply readily available sites for new businesses or industries.

ED.10.2: Maintain an inventory of usable industrial and commercial land that is sufficient to meet projected demand and encourage marketability of the City.

ED.10.3: Ensure that potential industrial and commercial land has the characteristics necessary to support commerce and industry.

ED.10.4: Designate adequate usable land to meet future needs for light industry and commerce, and encourage its efficient use.

ED.10.5: Provide adequate transportation, utilities, and state of the art technologies to support future light industrial and commercial needs through capital improvements and franchise agreements.

Figure 7.1 below represents the current inventory of commercial and industrial land available within the City.

FIGURE 7.1 Commercial & Industrial Inventory Figures	Total City Acreage	% of City that is Commercial/ Industrial Land	Total Commercial & Industrial Acreage	Undeveloped Vacant Commercial & Industrial Land
2002 City Limits Area	3286.6 Acres	36%	1156.69 Acres	501.29 Acres approx.
2022 City Limits Area	N/A	N/A	no anticipated change	N/A

Note: City Limits Figures include the area NE of the City that was annexed into the City of Liberty Lake in Nov. 2002
Source: Planning & Community Development Dept., Spokane County Assessor

While the total acreage available within the City for commercial and industrial development is not anticipated to change by 2022, the land use designations may be changed to allow for a wider variety of uses that also enhance the community's character. The new Comprehensive Plan designations for commercial and industrial uses include mixed use, as well as commercial and light industrial. Those categories are defined in the Land Use element of this plan; refer to

the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map 2.2 for category locations. The categories are summarized as follows:

1. **Mixed-use Areas** – Mixed-use areas are intended to enhance service options, encourage development of locally serving commercial uses, offices, light manufacturing, civic, recreational, and residential uses along transportation corridors. Mixed-use areas discourage low-intensity, auto-dependent uses and focus on a pedestrian orientation with an emphasis on aesthetics and design.
 - a. **Neighborhood Centers** – Mixed-use centers for neighborhoods will ideally have identified neighborhood centers containing a civic green or park, a transit stop, neighborhood businesses and services, a day care center, and perhaps a church or school, and residential when associated with the other permitted uses.
 - b. **Community Centers** - Community centers are higher-intensity mixed-use areas designed to serve two or more neighborhoods. Community centers may have a mix of uses, including commercial, civic, light manufacturing or industrial, office, recreational uses, and residential when associated with the other permitted uses.
 - c. **Central Business District** - The CBD is the primary retail, office, social, urban residential, and government center of the city. The complementary and interactive mixture of uses and urban design provides for a regional intensity and viability with a local character. The regional focus and vitality of the district are evident in the urban intensity and composition of the uses in the district. Local character is reflected in the district's design, people-orientation, and connectivity, which foster a sense of community. The CBD is intended to attract significant numbers of additional office and retail jobs as well as opportunities for new higher density housing.
2. **Commercial Categories**
 - a. **Freeway Commercial** - The Freeway Commercial classification designates intensive commercial areas intended to draw customers from outlying areas. Interstate 90 is an aesthetic corridor and specific guidelines will be established to enhance the aesthetics of the Interstate 90 frontages. Shopping centers and major commercial areas of regional significance will be designated with this classification. Residential uses would typically not be allowed within the freeway commercial category. Light industrial areas may be allowed in this category.
 - b. **Community Commercial** - The Community Commercial classification designates areas for retail, service, and office establishments intended to serve several neighborhoods. Community business areas should be located as business clusters rather than arterial strip commercial development. Community business centers may be designated through the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan or Comprehensive Plan amendments. Residences in conjunction with business and/or multifamily developments may be allowed, with specific guidelines that ensure compatibility.
 - c. **Neighborhood Commercial** - The Neighborhood Commercial classification designates areas for small-scale, neighborhood-serving retail and office uses. Neighborhood business areas should be located as business clusters rather than arterial strip commercial development. Neighborhood business centers may be designated through the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan or Comprehensive Plan amendments

3. Industrial Category

- a. **Light Industrial** - The Light Industry category is intended for industrial areas that have a special emphasis and attention given to aesthetics, landscaping and internal and community compatibility. Light Industrial areas are comprised of predominantly industrial uses such as manufacturing, but may incorporate office and commercial uses that support and complement the industrial area.